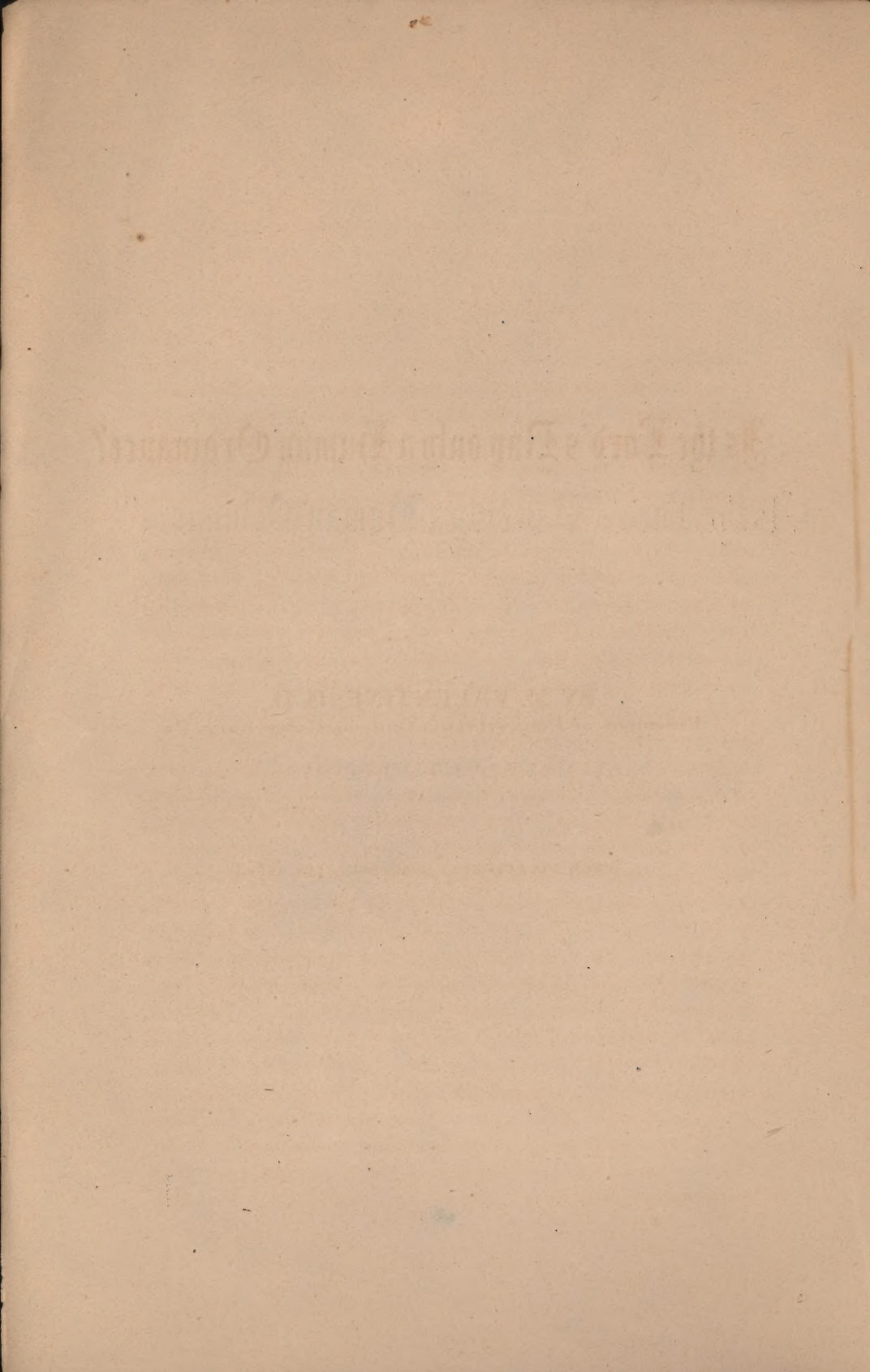


*College Library*

# *Is the Lord's Day only a Human Ordinance?*

BY M. VALENTINE, D. D.,  
President of Pennsylvania College, Gettysburg, Pa.

[FROM THE LUTHERAN QUARTERLY, JAN. 1881.]





# Is the Lord's Day only a Human Ordinance?

BY M. VALENTINE, D. D.,  
President of Pennsylvania College, Gettysburg, Pa.

[FROM THE LUTHERAN QUARTERLY, JAN. 1881.]

FROM THE (MAGNET) OF THE (MAGNET)

THE (MAGNET) OF THE (MAGNET) OF THE (MAGNET)

DATE OF AVERAGE (MAGNET) OF THE (MAGNET)

THE (MAGNET) OF THE (MAGNET) OF THE (MAGNET)



## IS THE LORD'S DAY ONLY A HUMAN ORDINANCE?

---

The distinct and sole question in this paper is whether the Lord's Day is simply a "human ordinance in the Church." This view of it, to the surprise and regret of many, was strenuously urged in the last Holman lecture delivered before the students of the Theological Seminary at Gettysburg, and published in the *QUARTERLY REVIEW* for last July. Of course, all who are familiar with the history and discussion of the Sabbath question understand that this is not a new view. It has been held by many persons, not only in the Lutheran Church, but in all the other Churches. It has been widely taught, and has made its effects visible especially in the loose Sunday observance in the countries of continental Europe. It is adopted and maintained, too, by the entire school of rationalistic theologians and writers, of every shade of skeptical thought from the respectful liberalism that keeps within the Churches to the open infidelity that scoffs without. Having rejected the supernaturally divine in Christianity itself, rationalism necessarily fails to see anything truly divine in the sacred day of Christianity. Skeptics accept and assert the merely ecclesiastical origin and authority of the Christian Sabbath, because this view of it takes away at least one so-called divine institution, and is recognized as having a clear trend toward the aggregate conclusion which they desire to establish. Of course, it is understood that orthodox theologians, in maintaining it, have no sympathy whatever with the motives and aims of this class. They assert and defend this view of the Lord's Day in sincerest conviction of its correctness and in truest desire to serve the interests of the divine kingdom. They are men, in many cases, whose general theological position is in intensest antagonism to rationalistic methods and tendencies, and unsurpassed in orthodox conservatism and churchliness. Justice requires that this difference in the atti-

tude of the classes that furnish supporters to this low view of the day should be fully recognized and remembered.

But though it is not new, this view has been but little, if at all, taught or defended in our Theological Seminary. Whatever may have been at any time asserted of the relation of our Confession to it, the view itself has, as a rule, been rejected. Almost the entire teaching of the institution, from its foundation, has been strongly averse to it. Its confident introduction in this case, with a claim for its acceptance as at once the Lutheran and Scriptural doctrine, necessarily raises the question of its correctness and justifies discussion. It involves a point of truth too vital and of too direct bearing on great moral, spiritual, and social interests, to be allowed to pass unchallenged. It can be accepted only after it is proved. The question, therefore, is, Is it *true*, that the Lord's Day is but a "human ordinance—true according to the holy Scriptures, true according to the teaching of the Lutheran Church?

The sense in which the lecturer has made the Lord's Day but a human ordinance must be distinctly fixed in our minds. The subject he discusses is "Church ordinances instituted by men." He develops it through such steps as these:

1. He distinguishes between the "divine" and "human" agencies in the Church: "The primary and essential factor in the constitution and development of the Church is the grace of God, operating through His divinely appointed means. When man becomes a recipient of divine grace, he is called to labor together with God in the development of the Church. Human agency \* \* is an essential factor."

2. He marks the *sphere* of the human action as that of the Church's "liberty:" "To the institution of such ordinances as may be observed without sin, and are profitable for tranquillity and good order in the Church."

3. He points out the things in which this is illustrated: "The abrogation of the ceremonial usages of the Old Testament, and the absence of divinely appointed rights and usages for the regulation of worship, government or discipline in the New Testament, necessarily requires the exercise of the subjective powers of man. \* \* Those who constitute the visible Church are



not only at liberty, but under obligation to ordain such rites and usages as are necessary to formulate its worship, to constitute and administer its government and to establish its doctrines." "Set holidays, feasts and such like," and the festivals of the "ecclesiastical year" are mentioned as prominent among the human ordinances rightly instituted in the Church.

4. The Lord's Day is distinctly put into this class of human ordinances, as distinguished from ordinances of divine appointment: "The Confessions of our Church seem clearly to teach that the designation of the first day of the week to be employed for holy use, is not to be referred to a divine obligation that the specified proportion of one day in seven be kept as a holy day, but that the observance of the Lord's Day is to be referred to the necessity for such suitable time as the Church *in the exercise of her liberty shall apportion* [the italics are ours], in order stately to administer the means of grace and to worship God publicly in the sanctuary." \* \* "The New Testament indicates the abrogation, not only of a *specific*, but of a *generic Sabbath*." \* \* "Without entering on an extended exegesis of the passages of Scripture which relate to this question, it may be observed that the foregoing language of the Confessions indicates that *the moral obligation of the Third Commandment does not pertain to the designation of one seventh of time for holy use as distinct from secular use*, but the holy use of whatever time human ordinances, in conformity to the law of good order, may designate for the administration of the word and sacraments, and for the worship of God. In other words, under the gospel, there is no day nor time, in itself by divine command, more holy than another, but there is a moral obligation upon the Church to administer the means of grace and worship God publicly in the sanctuary, and consequently to set apart such times for these purposes as the law of good order may designate."

We quote these extended passages to show the full and extreme sense in which the lecturer asserts the merely human origin and authority of the Lord's Day. He maintains an utter abrogation of the Sabbatic law of the Third Commandment,



both as respects the generic principle of one day in seven and the specific designation of the seventh day of the week. Assuming that no divinely appointed day of worship is left, he asserts that the human agency in the Church, under the general need of making some orderly arrangement for public worship, has in its "liberty" fixed upon the first day of the week for this purpose. If the divine obligation of the Third Commandment "does not pertain to the designation of *one-seventh of time* to holy use," this "liberty," of course, involved a right to fix upon some other proportion. The "human factor in the Church" is represented as the only source of its appointment and authority—the same authority, neither more nor less than that which has originated and sustains other "festivals and usages," as Good-Friday, Easter, Christmas, and Ascension-day. It has the same human origin that these have—the ordinary authority of the Church. It has not only no Sabbath authority or connection with the Third Commandment, but lacks all truly divine appointment. No divine law is broken when the Lord's Day is violated, for there is no law to break. And this "human ordinance" which is thus *of* the Church, becomes but an ordinance *in* the Church. The Church can legislate only for itself, and cannot impose its ceremonial order on society. This view of it, therefore, so thoroughly removes all basis of divine authority from the Lord's Day, and makes it so truly but a mere ecclesiastical ordinance, as to satisfy the loosest continental observance of it, and would go far toward justifying the outcry of unbelievers against all Sabbath laws as an unwarrantable restriction upon their right to a secular use of the day.

I. It should be enough for the disproof of this extreme teaching, that it is in plain conflict with the *admitted and certain facts connected with the origin of the Lord's Day*. Even if no account whatever should be taken of the Old Testament Sabbath, or if that Sabbath, "made for man," was abolished, the origin of this day cannot be thus wholly divested of all divine authority.

I. For it is a plain, undeniable fact, conceded and asserted in the very Confession which the lecturer is endeavoring to expound, that the day is at least of *apostolic* appointment. We



are aware of the criticisms that have been offered against the interpretation which makes the various passages in the New Testament concerning the "first day in the week," "the Lord's Day," &c., refer to the observance of this day, immediately after Christ's resurrection and on through the period of apostolic planting and training of the Church; but the best exegetical scholarship has abundantly sustained this interpretation. There can be no doubt that the observance of the Lord's Day arose under the teaching and practice of the apostles. But if anything more is needed to settle this point with the lecturer, it may be found in the explicit declaration of the Confession itself in the article, quoted in part to sustain his view. He is, doubtless, fully aware the *editio princeps* presents the really *unaltered* Augsburg Confession. It was issued by Melanchthon in German and Latin, the German text being printed from his own manuscript, from which the copy had been taken to be laid before the Diet. It is the edition received by Luther and the whole Lutheran Church. "Luther knew no other Augsburg Confession in the German than this. It was received into the Bodies of Doctrine of the whole Church." \* \* "Nothing could seem to be more certainly fixed than that this original edition of Melanchthon presented the Confession in its most perfect form, just as it was actually delivered in the Diet." \* \* "The highest critical authority, then, both German and Latin, is that of Melanchthon's own original editions."\* In this authentic edition of the German, the Confession is explicit in asserting the *apostolic* designation of the Lord's day. Literally translated it declares: "For the Church has not displaced or annulled the Sabbath, but God Himself has taught us that we, in the New Testament should not be bound to the law of Moses. Therefore have the *apostles* let the Sabbath fall, to remind us thereby that we are not bound to the law of Moses. And yet since it is necessary in order that the people may know when they should come together, to determine a certain day, *they* [*i. e. the apostles*] have ordained Sunday, that men should therein hear and learn God's word."†

---

\*Dr. Kräuth's Int. to Augs. Conf., p. xxxiv.

†Müller's Symbolische Bücher, p. 901.



There seems to be no need of discussing this point, but it is proper and necessary to quote a few authorities in order to show how the lecturer, in referring the day to ordinary human ecclesiastical agency, has put himself in conflict with the teachings of his own Church. *Luther* himself says: "I believe that the *apostles transferred* the Sabbath to Sunday, otherwise no man would have been so audacious as to dare to do it."\* *Melanchthon*: "The change from the seventh day to the first, was not made by Church authority, but by the *apostles*."† *Gerhard*: "There is a *Christian Sabbath*, for according to appointment of the *apostles* the first day of the week has been set apart for the public assemblies of the Church." \* \* "We must here explain why the first day of the week was set apart by the *apostles* for the service of public worship. The first and chief reason is that Christ rose from the dead on this day, as appears from the Gospel history, Matt. 28 : 1, Mark 16 : 1, whence the first day of the week is called the *Lord's Day*.‡" *Quenstedt* says: "Only the ceremonial part of this commandment has been abolished in the New Testament, that which is moral still remains, that is, in place of the seventh day has come the *first* day, in place of the Jewish Sabbath that which we call the *Lord's Day*, one day of the seven still retained with the force of a divine precept. \* \* It is certain that Christ has consecrated this day by His own resurrection on it and by His own example. For not only did He rise on the first day of the week, but on the same appeared to His disciples, John 20 : 2, 19, and after eight days He was seen by Thomas v. 26. On the same day also the Holy Spirit was poured out upon the assembled apostles, Acts 1. and Rev. 1 : 10; by consent of all the first day of the week was called the *Lord's day*, as being, if not expressly declared sacred by the Lord, yet consecrated by His example. Then the *apostles*, for introducing Christian liberty more fully and removing the shadows of the Old Testament, by the *divine authority with which they were endowed* sanctified and instituted this first day of the week into the regular Sabbath of Chris-

---

\*Tischreden, *Luther's Works*, Erlangen edition, 60, p. 388.

†Annotations on Gospels, quoted by Dr. Krauth, *Evan. Review*, 1857.

‡Loci Theologici XIII. 139, 141.



tians, in order not only that they might have time for sacred services, especially in public, but also that a festival might be kept in honor of the resurrection and appearance of Christ as well as of the descent of the Holy Spirit from heaven. Justin Martyr affirms that the apostles received the celebration of this day from Christ."\* Quenstedt also quotes from *Chemnitz*: "*We deny that the change of the Sabbath into the Lord's Day comes from the Church; the APOSTLES, whom Christ constituted, in his place, teachers of the world and especially of the Gentiles, and whom we rightly follow, introduced this change. This is to be held, in opposition to the papists who refer this change to the implied, and not to the written, tradition of the Church.*"

Equally emphatic statements might be given from *Lyser*, *Calovius*, *Carpzov*, and others. But the passages quoted, as they set forth the uncontestable truth of the Scripture, are sufficient, and certainly decisive as to the teaching of our old theologians on this point. And it should be particularly observed, not only how clearly the fact of the *apostolic* designation of the Lord's Day is maintained, but also, as appears from the words of *Chemnitz*, that the very error of Rome against which our Church was testifying, was the error into which the lecturer has fallen, of referring the institution of the Lord's Day to an authority no higher than the common "power of the Church," the ordinary authority that institutes "human ordinances." *Lyser* says distinctly: "We deny that the change of the Sabbath into the Lord's Day originated from the Church."

2. The additional fact in this connection is here reached—that the *apostolic authority*, to which the rise of the day is thus traced, *was more than the mere ordinary Church authority* to which the lecturer assigns its origin. There was something involved in the office of the apostles beyond the "human factor" which is seen in the origination of "festivals," &c. No one but a Roman Catholic, with his 'apostolic succession' in the Pope and bishops, will pretend to make the ordinary authority of the Church equal to that with which the apostles were endowed. As we have already seen, it was Rome's exces-

---

\*Theologia Didactico-Polemica, DeLege, Cap. I. Sec. 2.

sive claim on this point that called forth the denial by our Confessors. And in this fact the clue is to be seen for the proper interpretation of what they say on the subject of the Sabbath and the Lord's Day.

Now it is conceded by all, that the apostles received a *special and divine commission, and under a peculiar and adequate inspiration exercised an authority which directly represented the mind and will of the Lord Himself*. In Chemnitz' language: "Christ constituted them, in His place, teachers of the world." They acted for Him, under a special direction and guidance of the Spirit, as promised to them, which gave, and has been in all ages understood to give, a divine authority to their official teaching and acts. They were assured that the Holy Spirit should teach them all things, bring all things to their remembrance, guide them into all the truth, enable them to testify of Christ, and show them things to come, John xiv., xv. and xvi. These assurances, confessedly, were given and accepted as a guarantee of supernatural direction and help, in the high office to which they were called, of planting and organizing the Church—an office in which they have had no successors, and could have none. It is agreed that, under Christ, they were the divinely inspired teachers and legislators of the Church—that they were thus infallible in their official teaching of doctrine and church order.

As presenting both strongly and beautifully this peculiar function of the apostles, giving divine authority to their acts, we quote from Bernard's Bampton Lectures for 1867, on the Progress of Doctrine in the New Testament. After pointing out the fact of difference between the ordinary enlightenment of the Spirit afforded to all believers, and the peculiar endowment of the apostles, he says: "But we speak now of that which is supreme. *'First Apostles.'* All the members have not the same office—Are *all Apostles?* No! the authorities, standards and types of truth are so by direct commission, and the gift which they receive is one which makes them so indeed. As the office, so is the gift. An incommunicable office has an incommunicable gift. An office which is to be solitary and supreme in the Church forever, has a gift adequate to secure the implicit confi-



dence of long-descending ages. \* \* There is no principle in the Bible more clear than that the gifts of the Spirit are diverse, and are, in character and proportion, adapted to the works which God assigns, and appropriated to the office which He creates. Now it is certainly one thing to be a member, and another thing to be a founder, of the Church. It is one thing to receive or to propagate the truth, and another thing to deliver it with the authority of God, and to certify it to the world forever. \* \* Such was the separate function of the Apostles of our Lord and Saviour, a function which they shared with the special messengers of God who went before them, and even with their Lord Himself. 'Ye are built,' said they to their brethren, 'ye are built on the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone. The corner-stone is but a part of the foundation, though it be the first and chief part; and this consolidation of the corner-stone with the adjacent foundations, as one basement to sustain the building, exhibits in the plainest manner the fact, that the Church, *in respect of its faith*, rests upon a testimony which was delivered, partly by Jesus Christ in person, and partly by the agents whom for that purpose He ordained.'\*

Now it is impossible to put together these two facts, the fact of the designation of the Lord's Day by the *apostles*, and the fact of their *divine or supernatural commission*, without seeing the utter untenableness of the lecturer's teaching which gives this day simply the rank of a "human ordinance," a product of the "human factor" in the Church, which originates such festivals as Good-Friday or Easter. It can have a semblance of truth only by confounding ordinary church authority with that divine legation given to the apostles. He who exalts the former to an equality with the latter, goes over to Rome with its pretence of infallibility. He who reduces the latter to the level of the former, and sees nothing but human ordinances in the products of the apostles' teachings and direction, saps the whole doctrine of their inspiration, which alone can be regarded as putting the stamp of a sure divine authority upon their work

---

\* Progress of Doctrine in the New Testament by T. H. Bernard, A. M. pp. 123-125.

for the confidence of all after ages. He refuses for their authority the very thing they claim—that it represents the Lord Himself, 1 Cor. 14 : 37.

II. The disproof of the lecturer's view of the Lord's Day might perhaps be allowed to rest here. It is confuted without going back of the status of the day in the present dispensation. But the lecturer, to give it this merely human authority, has felt himself obliged, as usual with defenders of the view he holds, to assume the extreme ground, that the entire divine Sabbath law of the Old Testament has been utterly abrogated. We have sought in vain for the proofs of this abrogation. And surely we ought to look for the most unequivocal evidence, when we are told to regard as of no force one of the laws which God set in the midst of a code, of which all the rest is confessedly of moral and unceasing obligation. But there are several points here.

1. The lecturer's doctrine of abrogation obliges him to deny the *pre-Mosaic institution* of the Sabbath. Whether he is right in this denial must be decided by the evidence in the case. What are the facts?

*First*, Moses closes the record of the six-days' creation with a declaration of an immediate sanctification of the Sabbath: "Thus the heavens and the earth were finished and all the hosts of them. And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had made, and He rested on the seventh day from all the work which He had made. And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it; because that in it He had rested from all His work which God created and made," Gen. 2 : 1-3. The natural interpretation of these words is that a Sabbath was set apart for man as soon as man was created. It has indeed been sometimes said that this statement of Moses may be *anticipatory*, and not *historical*. But this suggestion is wholly gratuitous. The words are too integral a part of the history of the creation, to allow them to be taken as a statement of what took place only several thousand years later, without plainly involving principles inconsistent with straight-forward history. *Luther*, in his Commentary on Genesis, written just before the close of his life, has thus interpreted this: "God did sanctify to Himself the



seventh day. This was especially designed of God, to cause us to understand that the 'seventh day' is to be especially devoted to divine worship. For that which is appropriated to God, and exclusively separated from all profane uses, is sanctified or holy. \* \* It follows, therefore, from this passage, that if Adam had stood in his innocence and had not fallen, he would yet have held the 'seventh day' as sanctified, holy and sacred. \* \* The Sabbath therefore has, from the beginning of the world, been set apart for the worship of God." \* *Delitzsch* interprets the divine act of 'sanctifying' as "not merely declaring holy, but communicating the attribute of holy, placing in living relation to God," and teaches that, while this was not the appointment of the distinctively *Jewish* Sabbath, it was an institution which pointed to that, in form of a Sabbath "which the forefathers of our race observed in paradise, as long as they continued in a state of innocence."

*Secondly*, although the history of more than 2500 years until the exodus is compressed in so few pages that it would not be wonderful if no mention of the observance of the Sabbath should occur, yet it does furnish traces of it, in the computation of time by "*seven days*," and by "*weeks*," Gen. 8 : 10, 12 ; 29 : 27, 28. The use of these terms cannot fairly be counted as nothing, unless they are otherwise satisfactorily accounted for, especially in view of the support a sabbatic interpretation of them receives from the hebdomidal division of time which scholarly research is discovering in very early Egyptian, Assyrian, Chaldaean and Hindu history. But a distinct mention of the Sabbath occurs in connection with the gathering of manna in the desert before coming to Sinai. The account is minute and circumstantial. According to directions a double amount of manna was gathered on the "sixth day," and Moses explained the reason : "This is that which the Lord hath said, 'To-morrow is the rest of the holy Sabbath unto the Lord.'" \* \* "Six days we shall gather it, but on the seventh day, which is the Sabbath, in it there shall be none." To those who disobediently

---

\*Cole's Trans. T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, p. 111.

went forth and sought manna on the seventh day, finding none, God directed the reproof: "How long refuse ye to keep my commandments and my laws?" Ex. 16 : 3-28. This is an unequivocal instance of requiring respect for the Sabbath as God's law for men before the giving of the decalogue. Canon Cook well observes on the passage: "No other account of the command (given without any special explanation), or of the conduct of the people, is satisfactory," except "that the seventh day was previously known to the people as a day separate from all others; and if so, it must have been observed as an ancient and primitive institution."

Now what reasons are given in the lecture for refusing this, and other evidence, which has satisfied the great body of Biblical interpreters, of a pre-Mosaic Sabbath? Nothing, as to Gen. 2 : 2, 3, but the inconsequent assertion that, as the preceding "days" may be long periods, this "seventh day" "blessed and sanctified," *may* be understood as "the last of those vast geological periods which science requires for the creation and existence of the pre-Adamite world." And as to the actual observance of the Sabbath in the wilderness of Sin, nothing but the remark—with passing mention of Paley's different supposition—that this "may be understood *proleptically*." One feels reluctant to characterize the expedient in this suggestion as it deserves. The alleged anticipatory character of this mention of the Sabbath is simply impossible, unless we refuse to be guided by the plain import of the account, and adopt the reckless arbitrariness that marks the methods of rationalism itself in treatment of history. For the account is a plain historical statement, as of actual occurrences connected with the sending of the quails and the manna; and the supposition of an anticipatory introduction of the Sabbath with a minute record of the behavior of the people toward it then and there, when, on the theory, no Sabbath yet existed, is absurdly incongruous and incredible. The license of method with Biblical history which this proleptical explanation involves, is extreme enough for fullest scope to the ways of Tübingen rationalism or to delight the heart of a reckless Renan.

These troublesome evidences of a primitive Sabbath are, of



course, greatly in the way of the view which makes the Lord's Day of simple human authority. They make it impossible to reduce the Sabbatic law of the Old Testament into a merely Jewish ceremonial ordinance. Like the family constitution, it is seen to come out of man's paradisaic state, as an institution under which the race was to start forward in its unfolding and history. As a principle of one day in seven as a sacred day of rest in the interest of man's higher nature, it was put in a relation of broadest universality for humanity. It is older than the Jews, and the ceremonial system. It did not begin with the Mosaic law, and cannot be abrogated by its abolition. In this primitive appointment of it at the beginnings of all the generations of men, it thus appears at once to take the place which the words of our Saviour clearly give it, as "*made for man*" in the most original and broadest relation—an institution providing for permanent necessities in his physical, mental and moral nature, and incapable, therefore, of repeal without violence to the nature given him and the spiritual welfare meant for him. Until the evidences, therefore, of the pre-Sinaitic institution of the Sabbath are more effectually impeached than they have been by the lecturer or by any of the writers who present his view, it must necessarily be held as having an origin and foundation so independent of the subsequent Mosaic law as to render it both unlikely that it should ever be abrogated, and utterly illogical to suppose it repealed by the simple termination of that law.

2. But further. Not only has the Sabbatic law of one sacred day in seven an unimpeached place of its own by divine appointment and for the essential needs of "man" thousands of years before Moses and the Jewish constitution, but the asserted abrogation of the *Third Commandment*, whose repeal is said to have repealed it, needs far better proof than has been given to sustain it. It is to be observed that the lecturer teaches a *total* abolition of this Commandment, wiping out the Sabbatic law in every sense, and completely removing "all distinction of days." "The New Testament," he declares, "indicates the abrogation not only of a specific, but of a generic Sabbath." He accepts Dr. Jacob's extreme assertion as to our Church: "She

utterly repudiates the Sabbath as a day, call it by what name you please." The point to be particularly noted in this teaching is, that it goes on the assumption that the Third Commandment was *simply and wholly* a "ceremonial" law, resting on no natural or ethical necessity, and expressing no principle of permanent moral obligation whatever. The double question, therefore, here comes up—was the Third Commandment *wholly and simply* a "ceremonial law," and has it been *entirely abrogated*?

Let the facts be recalled. This commandment was put primarily and fundamentally, not among the ceremonial ordinances, but in the midst of the code of moral laws, of which all the rest have confessedly a universal and perpetual obligation. It was, like the other nine commandments, written by the finger of God on the tables of stone, and laid up in the ark, in evident token of its belonging, like the rest, to the great moral system which was to underlie all Israel's mission for the whole earth. It is found, thus, in the midst of this *foundation*, upon which, then, the additional temporary Jewish ceremonial system was reared. In these "ten words," so solemnly given and specially guarded, it holds a connecting place between the things of God and the things of men, as essential to secure both the divine glory and human welfare. It is introduced by the impressive "Remember," a word which evidently links it with the Sabbatic principle which had been declared from Eden. There is certainly every indication that these commandments are all of equally binding and universal authority. There is absolutely nothing to warrant taking one of them out from the rest and transferring it wholly to the temporary ceremonial code. God, who makes no mistakes, has classed these ten together, as if in emphatic indication that they rest on a common moral basis. To those who doubt or deny that this command is moral, because the duty does not disclose itself to the human reason and conscience as duty prior to a positive enactment—using the term moral in a restricted and inadequate sense—it ought to be enough to remember what has already been stated, and what is now recognized as a fact beyond dispute, that as truly as the others, it rests on a natural foundation in man's constitution and relations. And as the decalogue was manifestly



given to the Israelites, not in any local and temporary relation, but as the chosen people to make known God's will to all the race when "the blessing of Abraham should come upon the Gentiles," it is surely impossible, with any sort of logical consistency, to assign the law of the Sabbath, so organically set in the midst of this summary of moral duties, a basis inferior and less permanent than that of the whole decalogue.

But this Sabbatic law which had thus been put into the fundamental and universal code of human duty, was then incorporated into what is more strictly and definitely called the *Jewish* law—both *ceremonial* and *civil*. And this manifestly on the principle that the true and necessary order for the institution of local laws must make them include those that are world-wide and eternal. Not because they were Jews, but because they were men, they came under the Sabbatic law; but because they were Jews they came under it with specific and amplified particulars of observance. Unquestionably a special form of the Sabbath did appear among them, under the added legislation which provided for their peculiar mission and position as constituting a local commonwealth and a temporary condition of the Church—the Sabbath in Hebrew vestments. There was thus a Hebrew Sabbath which was not alone that of the Third Commandment, but one which, while based on that, was characterized by particular observances and enforced by special penalties. What was done in this case, however, was only what was done as to the other precepts of the decalogue. They were all taken up and cast into a temporary Jewish mould. Manifestly, therefore, whatever may be said about the "Hebrew Sabbath," whether it abides still, or terminated with the overthrow of the Jewish Church and Commonwealth, when Christ turned the shadows of the ceremonial law into substance, evidently does not at all affect either the moral character of the Third Commandment or the question of its perpetual and binding obligation. That this "Jewish Sabbath" was ceremonial in its character and relations, certainly does not prove that the Third Commandment was wholly ceremonial.

Further, the claim of this Commandment to rank as a moral law equally with the others, is not impaired by the admitted

fact that it contains in its own form a ritual and temporary element. We here come upon the crucial point for the correct apprehension of the Sabbath question, a point which the lecturer does not seem to see or admit, but which is made abundantly clear by all thorough interpreters, and set forth by none more clearly and positively than by the theologians of the Church whose doctrine on this subject he has attempted to set forth. The substance of the commandment, as in the primal institution at creation, is the hallowing of one day in seven, and this is of moral and abiding obligation. The designation of the particular day, the *seventh*, is ritual and incidental. The former is a principle, the latter is but an incident in its application, and capable of change. In form, therefore, the precept consists of two parts. In its essence and as a moral principle, the law is: "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy." Its ritual and so-called ceremonial part is the added specification of the seventh day, with the reasons for it. The inclusion of this temporary designation no more proves the commandment itself to be without moral and permanent basis, than a similar temporary application of the fourth (fifth) Commandment to the promised land shows the law of filial duty to have no moral basis or abiding obligation. And to suppose the Sabbath law identical with the attendant naming of the seventh day, or incapable of a different designation of day without destroying it, is to confound the substance of it with what was only formal and determinative.

Our theologians are unmistakably clear on this point, and emphatically assert, over against our lecturer, that the "moral obligation of the Third Commandment" *does* "pertain to the designation of one seventh of time for holy use as distinct from secular use." Melancthon says: "The *genus* which is embraced in this Commandment is *moral and perpetual*. *As regards this genus, Christians are bound by this Commandment. The genus is immutable, and is the chief thing in this command. But as regards the species, that is, the observance of the SEVENTH DAY, it is ceremonial.*"\* In his Exposition of the Nicene Creed:

---

\*Catechism for Youth, Corpus Reformatorum, xxiii., p. 134.



"The Commandment concerning the Sabbath is *ceremonial* as to the *species*. But it is *natural* or *moral* as to the *genus*.\* In *Loci Communes*, he says: "It is rightly said that in the Third Commandment *there are two parts*, the one *natural* or *moral*, or the *genus*; the other part or *species*, in regard to the *seventh day*, is a ceremony peculiar to the people of Israel."†

*Chemnitz*: "The New Testament has abrogated not the *genus*, which is *moral*, but the *species*, which is *ceremonial*."‡

*Gerhard*: "In this commandment we must carefully distinguish the ceremonial from the moral part. The sanctifying of the Sabbath and abstinence from works which interfere with divine worship, that is, the ordaining of the public service of the Church on fixed days, some fixed time, for the sake of good order, for the ministry of the word, is *moral*. But the sanctification of the *seventh day*, that is, to give the *Jewish Sabbath* observed in the Old Testament to this service, is *ceremonial*."§

*Calovius*: "The rest of the Sabbath is to be distinguished as *moral* and *ceremonial*. For the *moral part* is *perpetual* and *pertains to all men*, but the *ceremonial* is *temporary* and *peculiar to the Jewish people*."||

*Quenstedt*: "In the Sabbath we must carefully distinguish the *moral* from the *ceremonial*; the *ethical* or *moral* is the *cardinal number* or the *indefinite seventh*, or that one day in seven be devoted to the divine worship; the *ceremonial* is the *ordinal number* and *definite seventh* or that precisely the seventh day in the order must be sanctified."¶

But is needless to multiply quotations. This distinction is put into the very front by our chief old theologians, whenever they undertake to explain the foundations of the Christian Sabbath. On this point, as on the question of the primitive institution at the creation, they appear to be absolutely unanimous. With clear, united voice, and incontrovertible correctness, they interpret the Third Commandment as resting on and carrying forward a divine law as old as creation, and as, *in its substance*,

\*Corpus Ref., xxiii., p. 565.

†Edition of 1545.

‡Examen Concil. Trid.

§Loci Theol. xiii., 123.

||Biblia Illustrata, Ex. 20 : 11.

¶Theologia Didactico-Polemica, Cap. I. De Lege Dei,

*moral and permanent for all the race.* They seem to protest in advance against any Lutheran ever teaching that God gave no divine Sabbath day to the world till the Jews came to Sinai, nor meant to leave any to mankind after the end of the Jewish constitution. They seem to have thrown their whole weight against the idea that the only sacred day that God has ever really ordained was a little, local, transient ceremonial of the Jews.

3. When we come to inquire more particularly into the proofs which the lecturer, and those who agree with him, give of the asserted abrogation of the Third Commandment, in the New Testament, they are found surprisingly inconclusive.

Sometimes it has been said, though not in this lecture, that Christ broke the Sabbath and by His example set it aside. But no allegation could be less sustained. To believe it, is to accept the bitter imputations of His enemies as the very truth. Pharisaism had overlaid the commandment with additions which destroyed its true character and use. The real controversy between Him and His adversaries was, whether it was "lawful to do good" on this day. They had hedged it about with spurious restrictions which interfered with this, and perverted the Sabbath law from its true relation to the service of man—had changed it from a means to an end. He was, therefore, stripping it of the perversions with which it was overlaid and almost annulled, replacing it on its original and abiding foundations and showing the proper way to sanctify it. 'Doing good' was not inconsistent with God's resting, nor prohibited by the law: "*My Father worketh hitherto—and I work.*" As Lord of the Sabbath He was interpreting it anew: "*It is lawful to do good on the Sabbath days.*" "*The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath.*" He took the yoke off the day, but left the day—resisting the misconstructions that would destroy it from man for whom it was made.

Sometimes we are told, yet not in this lecture, that Christ has nowhere taught that this commandment is of moral and perpetual obligation. Even were this true, it would not be in evidence. For there was no call or need for a formal particularizing of the binding authority of this specific law. It was not questioned. And why should it be expected that there would



be a formal reënactment of an unrepealed statute which was accepted as coming down, with divine authority, from the day of the finished creation. But it is simply *not true*, that Christ has nowhere taught the moral authority of this command. In the Sermon on the Mount, where by universal consent, He is dealing with the moral law, moral principles, the deep and holy principles covered by the decalogue, and asserting the relation men are to sustain to them in the new dispensation of His Church or "kingdom," He at once declares their binding authority in profounder reality than ever understood before, and *forbids the exclusion of any one*: "*Whosoever therefore shall break one of the least of these commandments, and teach men so, he shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven.*" "*Think not that I am come to destroy the law.*" And He proceeded to illustrate His meaning and reference, by speaking distinctly of a number of the precepts of the *decalogue*. Does this look as if He intended soon wholly to set aside one of these commandments? Rather, He here transfers this decalogue, without abatement in the least, into fundamental position and authority under His mediatorial reign. Subsequently when asked by the lawyer, "Which is the great commandment," Christ summed up the law: "*Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.*" As these two commandments answer to the two tables of the moral law, and are confessedly a summary of their precepts, the language of Christ is an unqualified ratification of them all as the expression of universal duty among men. *Melanchthon* was not wrong when, treating of the Decalogue, he said: "The first three precepts, Thou shalt have no other gods before me, Thou shalt not take the name of thy God in vain, and *Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy*, are undoubtedly set forth by Christ in this great Commandment, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, &c.\**"

---

\**Loci Communes*, 1521.

But the lecture bases the abrogation on St. Paul's words: "Let no man therefore, judge you in meat or drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or the Sabbath days, which are a shadow of things to come, but the body is Christ," Col. 2: 16, 17; and "One man esteemeth one day above another; another esteemeth every day. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind," Rom. 14: 5. But these texts, rightly understood, are utterly insufficient to prove such abrogation. The facts must be kept in mind—that when St. Paul wrote, the distinctively Jewish ceremonial system had been fulfilled and its shadows turned into substance by Christ; that the incidental designation of the last day of the week for the Sabbath, in the Commandment, was capable of change without at all touching the substance of the law; that the Christians had now already for more than thirty years, under the divinely guided ministry of the apostles, with the manifest approval of the Saviour Himself, been holding their assemblies for worship on the "first day of the week," which thus, as "the Lord's Day," was practically serving the moral end of the Sabbatic law, while many, especially Jewish believers, were keeping up also the observance of the Jewish day; that some Judaizing teachers were disturbing the consciences of the Gentile Christians with assertions of the binding authority of the old ritual; and that *this* is the error and bondage from which the apostle was setting them free. The Sabbatic law was no longer to be found flowing necessarily through its *Jewish* channel, but in and along its divinely-meant channel of New Testament designation made by the Redeemer in His finished redemption. It is absolutely certain, and evident on its very face, that the apostle in these passages had no reference whatever to the Lord's Day, but to the *Jewish* seventh-day Sabbath and other holy days. The attempt is made, indeed, to explain the text from Romans as declaring a "removal of all distinction of days." Dr. S. M. Hopkins thinks the words *πᾶσαν ἡμέραν* decisive on this point. But, manifestly, unless we take the passage away from its connection, the only distinction of days it swept away was the Jewish distinction. We are told in the lecture, that the apostle "struck not at a day, but at a principle." But the connection makes it equally plain that the



"principle" he struck at, and struck away, was simply that of binding the Christian conscience with the Jewish ritual.

Now, what is the conclusion to which this long array of facts rightly forces us? Certainly not to the immense and improbable one that the great Sabbath law which God ordained at the origin of the race, which He subsequently put into the very heart of the great moral code meant for all mankind, which the Saviour, as its Lord, cleansed of human excrescences, interpreted afresh, and declared "made for man," has suddenly and wholly come to an end—God giving us not a single word of indication of its abrogation except these several apostolic statements which fail to declare it. Are we to believe it repealed, on no better ground than this? And that, too, when all the moral necessities for a consecrated day remain; and the need is so apparent and great, it is confessed, that the Church has had to fill the place of the divine law with a human ordinance? Surely, men who teach us to hold ourselves freed from a law of God so deeply grounded in the bodily and moral necessities of man's nature, made to stand in the midst of a code all the rest of which is confessedly of divine and perpetual obligation, and honored by Christ's re-consecration of it to its right use, ought to give us something clearer than this from the word of God, if they are not to be found making "void the law of God" through human traditions. The true and necessary conclusion is, that no such abrogation was meant and none has taken place; but that Christ as "Lord of the Sabbath" has caused this great law to pass on in the first day of the week, out of its temporary Jewish place and rank into the broader relations of Christianity, and with the new spiritual powers it has been meant to carry for mankind under the great plan of redemption.

As a fully sufficient reason therefore for rejecting the lecturer's teaching on this subject, we sum up the double conclusion:

1. That the appointment of the Lord's Day *by the apostles*, as the directly accredited and divinely guided agents of Christ—to go no farther back—itself forbids the classification of the day as a simply "human ordinance," resting on the ordinary authority of the Church.

2. That the Third Commandment, in that which constitutes

it a *moral* law and gives it its place in the decalogue, has *not* been shown to be abrogated by the change of its ceremonial designation under Christ and His apostles.

III. The claim that this "human-ordinance" view is the '*Lutheran doctrine*,' and the echo to this claim from some quarters, make it necessary to add some fuller disproof of this point. Considerable evidence has already been introduced, in which our Confession and theology are found to teach the divine authority and permanent obligation of the Sabbath. But it is proper to show by fuller quotations how strongly our Church has put its testimony on this subject.

While, it is admitted, some passages may be brought from the writings of Luther and others, which appear to sustain the lecturer's low interpretation of the Confession, an honest comparison of such passages with their more explicit and definite statements abundantly shows that interpretation to be erroneous. It is not to be supposed that our writers, amid the violent conflicts of the times, kept themselves infallibly self-consistent; but it is inexcusably unfair to make them teach views which their clearest utterances disown and refute. We wish to let the question be decided by the writers themselves, and will give their words under the several points involved in the subject. Our limited space, however, will allow us to quote only in briefest form a small amount of what might be given.

#### 1. *The Sabbath from creation.*

LUTHER'S unequivocal declaration, written near the close of his life, has already been given from his Commentary on Gen. 2: 1-3. On Ex. 16: 23, he says: "The Sabbath existed before the law of Moses came, and had been, indeed, from the beginning of the world."

MELANCHTHON speaks of the decalogue as presenting the eternal rules of the divine mind, and says: "They sounded at all times in the Church, *even before Moses*.\*

GERHARD, on "Remember" in the commandment, says: "Since immediately at the creation a Sabbath was sanctified by God, so the memory of this is renewed by a word of recollection."†

\*Loci Communes, 1545.

†Loci Theologici, De Lege, 123.



The lecturer's quotation from Gerhard is from a note, not on the institution of the day, but its *customary observance* (usitatum).

CALOVIVS puts emphasis on "the consecration of the seventh day to divine worship from the Sabbath of creation," and declares this as "*undoubted among our [Lutheran] theologians, who here agree with one consent.*" On Gen. 2 : 3: "The Sabbath was consecrated therefore from that time; it was not instituted first after Israel was led out of Egypt; and therefore *even in a state of innocence the seventh day would have been sacred.* Without doubt, from the very beginning of the world, God has sanctified and instituted the seventh day for His worship."\*

QUENSTEDT asserts and defends the thesis: "The sanctification of the Sabbath was not instituted first at the time of Moses, when the decalogue was promulgated on Mount Sinai, *but was ordained immediately from the creation of the world.*"†

But it is useless to multiply quotations in evidence on this point. It is sufficient to quote the testimony of Dr. Krauth: "In common with Luther and Melancthon, the entire body of Lutheran theologians for two centuries, without a single exception of which we are aware, held to the primitive sanctification of the Sabbath. While among the Jewish, the Romish and the Reformed interpreters, there were some who maintained the opposite view, we cannot for two centuries after the Reformation find a solitary theologian, rigid as was their adherence to the Confession, who did not reject the idea that the words in Gen. 2 : 3, were put there by anticipation. All of them contend for a primitive Sabbath. The inference, therefore, is resistless that the confessors did not teach nor imply that the devotion of one day in seven to God, was of Mosaic origin."‡

2. *The primitive Sabbath founded on nature.*

MELANCHTHON: "As respects the *genus*, it is NATURAL or moral."

CALOVIVS: "We affirm without doubt that the religious rest of the Sabbath is to be derived not only from the primitive in-

---

\*Biblia Illustrata, I. p. 56, 232.

†Theologia Didactico-Polemica, DeLege Dei I., 2.

‡Ev. Review, Jan. 1857, p. 375.

stitution in the sanctification of the first Sabbath by the example and rest of God Himself, but *also that it is from a law of nature, as if inscribed in the hearts of men.*"\*

QUENSTEDT: "The sanctification of the Sabbath was instituted not first at the time of Moses, when the decalogue was given at Sinai, but ordained immediately at the creation; *and so began with the law of nature.*"†

HOLLAZ: "*For it is evident from nature* that some time is to be devoted to divine worship; a divine appointment in Paradise set apart the seventh day."‡

3. *The Third Commandment in substance moral and of perpetual obligation.*

Testimony on this point has already been given at considerable length, from *Melanchthon*, the writer of both the Confession and the Apology; *Chemnitz*, one of the authors of the Form of Concord, and sometimes called "the great theologian of our Church;" *Gerhard*, whose *Loci Theologici* is regarded as a "model" of theological discussion; and *Quenstedt*, whom *Luthardt* places next to *Gerhard* as a representative of the orthodox dogmatik. The distinction they make between the *moral* and *ceremonial*, the *material* and *formal*, or the *genus* and the *species* in the Commandment, and the assertion that the *moral* part is of perpetual and universal obligation, are repeated and emphasized all through our theology.

CALOVIVS, severe against all dissent from the Confessions, says: "The *moral* rest of the Sabbath must be distinguished from the *ceremonial*. For the *moral* is perpetual and pertains to all men; but the *ceremonial* is temporary and peculiar to the Jews. Nevertheless it is *moral* that on the Sabbath we should rest from ordinary and servile labors."§

HOLLAZ: "When God commands, Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy, the object to be sanctified is the *day of the Sabbath.*" It is to be well observed here that the Third Commandment contains something *moral* to which *all men* are

---

\**Systema Theol.*, quoted by Quenstedt.

†Quenstedt, Theol. Didac. Lege Dei, I., 2.

‡Examen Theologicum Acroamaticum, Part III., Sec. II., 1.

§Biblia Illustrata, p. 412.



*bound*, and something *ceremonial* which is peculiar to the people of Israel. The former is *perpetual*, the latter *temporary*. It is moral that some one day of the seven be set apart for sacred worship; it is ceremonial that precisely the seventh day be set apart to the service of divine worship; or as some prefer to say, the *moral part in the Sabbath is an indefinite seventh and ordinal number*, or that some seventh day be consecrated to divine worship, but the *ceremonial* is the definite seventh and cardinal number, or that precisely *this* seventh in the order be sanctified. \* \* *The moral still remains*; the ceremonial is abrogated."\*

BUDDEUS: "But that the Sabbath was instituted by God immediately at the close of creation is evident from Gen. 2 : 1, 2. For they do violence to the plainest words of the divine Scripture, who try to persuade themselves and others that the Sabbath is there mentioned proleptically. Whence also it necessarily follows, that *the law concerning the sanctification of the Sabbath binds not only the Israelites, but all men.*"†

4. *The Lord's Day is of APOSTOLIC appointment, and CARRIES FORWARD THE MORAL LAW OF THE THIRD COMMANDMENT.* This covers the two decisive points involved in the whole question, and the testimony is clear and full:

LUTHER: "I believe that the *apostles transferred the Sabbath to Sunday*, otherwise no man would have been so audacious as to dare to do it. And I believe that they did it especially that they might tear from the hearts of the people the imagination that they were justified and holy through the law, and in order that men might be surely and steadfastly persuaded that the *law is not necessary to salvation*. But the *apostles* were moved thereto by the resurrection of Christ our Lord, and the sending of the Holy Ghost on Pentecost."‡

*"As the same Sabbath is now changed for us into Sunday, and the other days are work-days; Sunday is the day of rest, or holy day, or sacred day." And would to God that in Chris-*

---

\*Examen Theol. Part III., Sec. 2, 1.

†Theologia Dogmatica, Lib. III., cap. 2.

‡Tischreden, as already quoted.

*tendom there were no holy day except Sunday, and that all the festivals were put upon Sunday.*"\*

Luther has put this commandment into both his Catechism, as pertaining, in its substance, to the Christian life. In the Larger Catechism he sets forth how men may violate it: "*God will have this commandment strictly kept, and will punish all those who despise his word, and will not hear nor learn it, especially at the time appointed therefor.*" Was Luther illogical enough to connect together the incongruous ideas of *sinning against a law totally repealed, and to which we sustain no moral relations whatever?*

MELANCHTHON says: "The apostles changed the day, for this very reason, that they might show an example of the abrogation of the ceremonial laws of the Mosaic polity in the seventh day."† He defines at length how men *sin against* this Commandment, works of "necessity and mercy" being allowable.

CHEMNITZ: "*We deny that the change of the Sabbath into the Lord's Day comes from the Church; the apostles whom Christ appointed in His own place as teachers of the world, and especially of the Gentiles, and whom we rightly follow, introduced this change.* This is to be held over against the Romanists, who refer this change to the unwritten, and not to the written tradition of the Church."‡

GERHARD: "*Why, in the New Testament, has the first day of the week been appointed in place of the Jewish Sabbath?* It was set apart, by the apostles for the exercise of divine worship, chiefly on the ground that on this day Christ rose from the dead. \* \* There is a *Christian Sabbath*, since according to the constitution of the apostles, the first day of the week has been set apart for the public assemblies of the Church."§

CALOVIOUS: "*This is by no means restricted to the Jews, nor is it abrogated in the New Testament, as far as it is moral.* It was in force before God chose the people of Israel, even from the beginning of the world. Further, the reason is a general one,

---

\* Sermon on Good Works.

† Exposition of Nicene Creed, Corpus Reformatorum, xxiii., p. 565.

‡ Harm. Evang. c. 119, quoted by Quenstedt.

§ Loci Theol. Loc. xiii., 139, 141.



looking to all men. *So Christians are under obligation to rest, and, with their servants, to cease from labors. Christ declares that the Sabbath has been made for man. The divine sanctification of the Sabbath both separates it from profane use, and consecrates it to sacred uses.* \* \* "The two opinions (one that Christ, the other that the apostles changed it into the Lord's Day) are reconciled without difficulty, if we say that Christ by His resurrection on this day and by His example consecrated it, \* \* but the apostles, by the divine authority with which they were endowed, sanctified and instituted the first day of the week into the ordinary Christian Sabbath."

"In the third place, Grotius cannot be acquitted of error, in denying that the Lord's Day was put into the place of the Sabbath, which he does, doubtless, to gratify the ANABAPTISTS who regard the Command of the Sabbath as entirely abolished, so that in virtue of Christian liberty they think any sort of work lawful on all days, which seems also to be the view of the SO-CINIANS, who are of near kin to Grotius. \* \* It ought not to be doubted that one day in seven has been retained by virtue of the divine Commandment, only the Lord's Day has been substituted for the day of the Sabbath. For as it binds the whole Church, both of the Old Testament and the New, from the foundation of the earth to the end of the world, both before the law, and under the law, and after the abolition of the ceremonial law, it is to be regarded as moral and perpetual."

"It is disputed whether Christ or the apostles substituted the Lord's Day, but all agree easily in this, THAT THE OBSERVANCE OF THE LORD'S DAY DERIVES ITS VALIDITY NOT FROM CUSTOM ALONE OR HUMAN CONSTITUTION, but has been sanctified by divine constitution, since those things which the apostles sanctified by apostolic authority, are to be esteemed as divine institutions."\*

The reader will please notice, how Calovius, who, Dr. Jacobs says, "represents the strictest school of orthodoxy,"† utterly condemns and repudiates this very "human-ordinance" view

\*Biblia Illustrata, I, 412, 414, 415.

†Schmid's Dogmatik, p. 676.

which our lecturer and those with whom he agrees have attempted to dignify with the honor and authority of the Lutheran name. Calovius, as do also Quenstedt and Hollaz, turns this view over where it does belong, not to Lutherans, but to the *Anabaptists* and the *Socinians*.

QUENSTEDT: "*Thesis*—one of the seven days, though not the seventh from creation, but a seventh in the weekly cycle, or one fixed day among the seven, by *virtue of the Third Commandment, as moral, is also in the New Testament* set apart for divine worship. For it is of perpetual moral obligation in the divine Commandment, that God be worshiped in an external manner and on a fixed day."

"The apostles, by the divine authority with which they were endowed, sanctified and instituted the first day of the week *into the ordinary Sabbath of Christians*.\*

Quenstedt mentions especially the *Socinians* and *Anabaptists* as among those who recognize nothing moral in this Commandment, and hold it to be entirely abrogated by Christ.

BAIER: "The Third Commandment requires the sanctification of the Sabbath, or the consecration of a certain day to the exercise of divine worship, especially public, and also prohibits works which either withdraw from or hinder divine service. Not, indeed, precisely of the *seventh* day in the order in every seven; for this pertains not to the *moral*, but the *ceremonial* law, and so at the beginning of the New Testament Church, after the resurrection of Christ, it was freely changed, so that *now* the *first* or *Lord's Day* should be celebrated."†

HOLLAZ, on Third Commandment: "In the New Testament these circumstances (Jewish additions), together with the circumstance of the definite seventh day, were abrogated by Christ through the apostles, and the first day of the week, called 'the Lord's Day,' which Christ had consecrated by His own authority and example, \* \* *was put in place of the seventh day*. The apostles then sanctified this first day of the week *into the ordinary Sabbath of Christians*."

---

\*Theologia Didactico-Polem., Cap. I., De Lege Dei.

†Compendium Theologiæ Positivæ, Part III., Cap. 7.



"The opposite opinion of the *Anabaptists* and *Socinians* is that Christ has wholly taken away the Third Commandment concerning the sanctification of the Sabbath. These allege, *first*, that distinctions of days are forbidden to Christians in the N. Test., Gal. 4 : 10. We answer : *Levitical distinctions* are not allowed to Christians, especially where observance of them may be believed to be necessary to salvation. They allege *secondly*, that the Sabbath was among the *shadows* of things to come, Col. 2 : 16. We answer : Paul speaks concerning the *Jewish observance* of feasts and Sabbaths as shadows, &c. *But the Lord's Day is not a shadow of things to come, but is to be held sacred on account of its grateful commemoration of the glorious resurrection of Christ.*"\*

These quotations from the old standard theologians are sufficient on this point. It needs only be observed how distinctly and positively they all treat the authority of the Lord's Day as a continuation of the force of the Commandment, and make the change to the first day of the week of *divine*, because of apostolic, authority. They name the opposite view but to discard it. And it is to be observed, too, that they teach the authority of a *particular* day as the "Christian Sabbath." Gerhard says: "We are taught to sanctify and transfigure with holy deeds the *entire* day of the Sabbath. There is a most wicked custom of spending only some very small part of the sacred day for divine worship, and giving the rest even to dances and feasts." In view of these extracts, the reader can easily say whether the assertion is true of our Church: "She utterly repudiates the Sabbath as a day, call it by what name you please."

5. *The* CONFESSIO *no denial of the divine authority of the day.*

WALCH, whose introduction to the Symbolical Books has been pronounced a classic, after quoting the words of the Confession, says: "If these words are so understood as if the Lord's Day was regarded by our fathers as a *human institution*, we confess they can by no means be approved. For it is established beyond a doubt that the celebration of the Lord's Day is *not a human*, but a *divine* institution, so prescribed to

---

\*Examen, Part III., Sec. 2, 1.

us that no change can be made in it, nor can the reason of it be that which belongs to other festival days or other ecclesiastical rites. \* \* This change was not *human*, but made by the *divine will and authority*, and hence the Lord's Day has been instituted by God Himself. \* \* For the apostles did it not as men, but moved by the divine counsel and instructed by the Holy Ghost. \* \* We have said these things as preliminary to the inquiry, what is the true meaning of the confessors concerning the Lord's Day. *They teach nothing injurious to the divine origin of this day.* \* \* We must consider what occasion the confessors had for speaking of the Lord's Day. This is found in the error of the papists, that the apostles and bishops had received power from Christ to prescribe rites which should be *necessary* and *meritorious*. This position the Romanists attempted to prove by the change of the Sabbath made by *Church authority*, and thus gave the confessors occasion for touching on the Lord's Day. What, therefore, they say concerning it, was specially directed against the papists, and was meant to show that this day was set apart for holy purposes, not to the end that we might attain a *certain justifying* merit by its observance."\*

This quotation is at once a testimony and an explanation. The confessors were antagonizing the Romish idea that the Church had power to ordain festivals and rites, whose observance was *necessary* and *meritorious* for salvation, an idea in conflict with free grace and justification through faith. It is this *Romish* necessity that they combat, asserting at the same time a true and abiding "necessity" for the sacred day of worship, and its *apostolic* appointment. They make the Lord's Day rest on a different basis from that which Rome assigned it. But "they teach nothing injurious to the divine origin of the day." We cannot do better than to quote here from DR. KRAUTH'S masterly discussion of this subject in *Evan. Review*, for Jan. 1857. He says of the Confession: "It removes the obligation to keep the Lord's Day holy from a false foundation to its true one. It overthrows the *Romish* principle of necessity, and brings in an evangelical principle of necessity, and rests the

---

\*Intro. in Lib. Sym., pp. 389-393.



observation of the Lord's Day on the generic character of the law of the Lord, that law which is natural, moral, primitive, universal, and incapable of abrogation." In the *Conservative Reformation*, Dr. Krauth says: "The Confession teaches that the Jewish Sabbath is abolished; that the necessity of observing the first day of the week rests not upon the supposition that such observance has in itself a justifying power, as the Romanists contended, but on the religious wants of men. It teaches, moreover, that the Lord's Day is of apostolic institution. The prevalent judgment of the great theologians of our Church has been that the Sabbath was instituted at the creation of man; that the generic idea it involves, requires the devoting of one day of the week as the minimum, to rest from labor and to religious duties, and so far pertains to the entire race through all time."

But the proofs against the lecturer's account of the Lutheran view of the Lord's Day may be allowed to rest here. These points are clear: *first*, the Confession asserts its *apostolic* origin, and our leading theologians teach, as truth requires, that this itself lifts it out of the category of merely human ordinances of common church authority. *Secondly*, these same great theologians, with unmistakable clearness and strong emphasis, also represent the Lord's Day as but the New Testament and divinely-guided designation or determination of the divine Sabbath law of creation and the decalogue, that law being in its substance moral and binding on all men.

Attention must be called to the fact that the GENERAL SYNOD has distinctly and repeatedly repudiated the interpretation which denies the divine obligation of the Lord's Day, or offers this human-ordinance view as the real "Lutheran" doctrine. It has solemnly defined its position on this subject, not in any way of qualifying its Lutheranism, but as asserting it. When at York, in 1864, it adopted its present form of subscription to the Augsburg Confession, in order to make explicit its understanding of certain disputed points, the General Synod adopted the following explanatory resolution:

"*Resolved*, That while this Synod, resting on the word of God as the sole authority in matters of faith, on its infallible warrant

rejects the Romish doctrine of the real presence or Transubstantiation, and with it the doctrine of Consubstantiation, rejects the Romish Mass and all the ceremonies distinctive of the Mass; denies any power in the sacraments as an *opus operatum*, or that the blessings of Baptism and the Lord's Supper can be received without faith; rejects auricular confession and priestly absolution, holds that there is no priesthood on earth but that of all believers, and that God only can forgive sins; and *maintains the divine obligations of the Sabbath*; and *while we would, with our whole heart, reject any part of any Confession which taught doctrines in conflict with this our testimony, nevertheless, before God and His Church we declare that in our judgment the Augsburg Confession, properly interpreted, is in perfect consistence with this our testimony and with the Holy Scriptures as regards the errors specified.*"\*

This declaration, being almost precisely the same as presented by Dr. Krauth and adopted in the Synod of Pittsburgh in 1856, was reaffirmed by the General Synod at its convention in Harrisburg in 1868; and at its convention in Dayton, O., in 1871, it was ordered to be appended as an "Explanation" to the Augsburg Confession in the Book of Worship, where it now stands. With solemn and prolonged emphasis, the divine obligation of the Christian Sabbath has thus been made part of our doctrinal position, and that interpretation of the Confession which attempts to deny it has been fully and definitely disowned. The General Synod has refused to allow its position on this great question to be at all equivocal, and earnestly repels the idea that the true "Lutheran" doctrine rejects this divine obligation of the day. Some one, indeed, has recently said that the General Synod is called 'general,' "probably for the reason that it is not very particular about anything;" but it has been particular enough to refuse to hold this as an "open question." It has sternly declined to permit the teaching of the *Socinians* and *Aanbaptists* to be substituted for the true Lutheran doctrine on this point.

We make no apology for this extended discussion. It is jus-

---

\*Minutes, p. 40.



tified by the great importance of the subject. Simple justice requires that the teaching of the Lutheran Church upon it should be better understood, and vindicated from misrepresentations and misapprehensions. The grand testimony which her theologians have given to the divine authority of the sacred day, is called for by the necessities of our times—a testimony than which none more profoundly Scriptural and satisfactory can be found in Christendom. We cannot consent that this testimony should be silenced, when the enemies of the Christian day of rest are marshaling their strength against it. The Sabbath institution which God has “made for man,” is of unspeakable value to every high and holy interest of the race. It is a great moral means to all the moral and spiritual ends for which man has been created and redeemed. If it stands in the midst of the moral law of the decalogue, every commandment calls for its presence. Not a single part of moral duty can afford to lose the service of this blessed day. Wickedness sees in it the key-position, by the taking of which it may hope to sweep the whole field. The day is not only necessary to the Church’s work, but, in its proper sanctification, essential to our true social and national welfare and order. It is needed for the victory of truth and righteousness in the earth. A mere holiday, as the chief receptacle for the dissipation, abandon and licentiousness of the week, will not answer. And nothing can be more certain than that the maintenance of our Christian Sabbath, with its true blessings, will depend upon our recognition of it as a law of God for all the world. Once let the truth of its divine character fall out of the Christian conscience and the public conscience of our land, and no human laws will be strong enough to withstand the powers of Sunday desecration. The civil laws for its quiet will soon be swept from the statute book, or be as if they were not. No mere church day, or “human ordinance” of ecclesiastical origin can hold the consciences of men or command their respect. Disbelief of the divine authority of the day is at the bottom of much of its present desecration. Only when men shall clearly recognize upon it the stamp of God’s own commandment for all the race, will it be rightly esteemed and observed.





